

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T BEIRUT 3731

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS R.) LE
SUBJECT: SECVISIT: LEBANESE DESIRES REGARDING AGENDA

1. CALLED ON FONMIN BOUTROS MORNING AUGUST 1 FOR LAST MINUTE
DISCUSSION OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR SECRETARY'S VISIT. BOUTROS WISHED
REGISTER POINTS BELOW.

2. GENERAL MEETING:

(A) LEBANESE WANT GENERAL MEETING TO FOCUS ON ARAB-ISRAEL
QUESTION. HE WILL PRESIDE, ALTHOUGH PRIME MINISTER HOSS WILL
ALSO BE THERE. HE PLANS MAKE BRIEF SPEECH OF WELCOME AND THEN ASK
WHAT SECRETARY CAN TELL THEM ABOUT PROSPECTS AND PLANS FOR SETTLE-
MENT. HE HOPES THAT IN HIS REPLY SECRETARY WILL BE ABLE TELL
MEETING SOMETHING ABOUT "NEW IDEAS" WE HAVE ON HOW SURMOUNT
OBSTACLES TO GENEVA, PARTICULARLY THAT OF PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION.
THEY ALSO HOPE TO GET FRANK STATEMENT OF US VIEWS
AND ISRAELI POSITION AND TO HEAR OUR VIEWS ON TIME AND PRO-
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CEDURAL ASPECTS LEBANESE PARTICIPATION, I.E. HOW TO GET AN
INVITATION. NOTE: THIS MEETING WILL LEAK LIKE A SIEVE. SECRETARY
SHOULD NOT SAY ANYTHING HE DOES NOT WANT TO GET INTO PUBLIC DOMAIN.
(B) BOUTROS DOES NOT REPEAT NOT WANT TO DISCUSS DETAILS OF SOUTH
LEBANON PROBLEM IN GENERAL MEETING. HE RECOGNIZES THAT PRIME
MINISTER MIGHT ASK OUR VIEW ON UN FORCES, BUT HOPES SECRETARY
CAN GIVE GENERAL RESPONSE, ALONG LINES THAT STATIONING OF SUCH

FORCES IS UP TO LEBANESE IN FIRST INSTANCE AND TO OTHER COUNTRIES CONCERNED IN SECOND.

(C) I TOLD BOUTROS SECRETARY MAY HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ON FY 78 AID, AND THIS WOULD APPEAR TO BE APPROPRIATE MEETING IN WHICH TO SAY IT. BOUTROS AGREED.

3. PRIVATE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT. PRESIDENT WANTS TO FOCUS ON THREE ASPECTS OF SOUTH LEBANON PROBLEM: LEBANESE RELATIONS WITH PALESTINIANS, SITUATION IN SOUTH, AND UN FORCES. BOUTROS WILL ALSO WISH TO DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS IN CAR ON WAY UP FROM AIRPORT AND WAY BACK FROM PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. (HE NOTED THAT BECAUSE THEY DO NOT WANT TO DISCUSS THIS QUESTION IN DETAIL IN FRONT OF HOSS, AND WISH TO EXCLUDE LATTER FROM PRIVATE MEETING, HE, BOUTROS, WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO EXCLUDE HIMSELF AS WELL, TELLING HOSS AMERICANS WANT TO RESTRICT MEETING TO SARKIS, SECRETARY AND ME.)

4. AFTER INITIAL REMARKS REPORTED ABOVE, WE HAD LONG DISCUSSION OF UN FORCES QUESTION. BOUTROS SAID ARMY COMMANDER HAD BEEN ASKED TO INFORM PRESIDENT BY AUGUST 2 WHETHER HE COULD MOVE TROOPS IN TO TAKE UP POSITIONS IN BORDER AREAS TO BE VACATED BY PALESTINIANS. THIS WOULD BE TOKEN FORCE, BUT IT MIGHT AVOID NECESSITY FOR RESORT TO UN FORCE. I SAID THIS WAS PROMISING DEVELOPMENT, BUT WE UNDERSTOOD GEN. KHOURY HAD BEEN VERY RELUCTANT TO SEND IN HIS TROOPS. IT WAS MY IMPRESSION THAT IF KHOURY SCRAPED BOTTOM OF EVERY BARREL HE HAD, HE COULD PERHAPS
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FIELD 1500 MEN, WHICH WOULD BE PRETTY SMALL NUMBER FOR TASK IN QUESTION, GIVEN THOUSANDS OF ARMED PALESTINIANS IN AREA. BOUTROS SAID HE THOUGHT NUMBER AVAILABLE TO KHOURY WAS PROBABLY HALF THAT. THERE WERE RISKS, AND THEY WERE AWAITING KHOURY'S ANSWER, BUT IF THEY COULD USE THEIR OWN TROOPS THAT WOULD BE WAY OUT OF PROBLEM OF USING UN FORCES.

5. I TOLD HIM FIRST STEP WAS FOR LEBANESE TO MAKE DECISION. I THOUGHT WE STILL OPEN-MINDED ON QUESTION, OUR ONLY PURPOSE WAS TO HELP LEBANESE, AND THEY WOULD HAVE TO DECIDE WHAT THEY WANTED. BOUTROS ADMITTED JUSTICE OF THIS, BUT SAID HE AND SARKIS DID NOT WANT TO PURSUE IDEA UNTIL THEY WERE CERTAIN IT WAS ACCEPTABLE AND PRACTICABLE. SPECIFICALLY, THEY WERE CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE PALESTINIAN AND SYRIAN OPPOSITION. THEY ALSO BEMUSED BY CHANGE IN ISRAELI POSITION BETWEEN RABIN AND BEGIN AND WONDERED WHAT LAY BEHIND IT.

6. I TOLD HIM THAT SUNNI MOSLEM LEADER SAEB SALAAM, WHO HAS GOOD PALESTINIAN CONNECTIONS, HAD TOLD ME ON JULY 30 HE WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT PALESTINIANS WOULD GO ALONG WITH UN FORCES IDEA. I DID NOT KNOW WHAT SYRIAN VIEW WAS. ISRAELIS APPEARED HAVE CHANGED BECAUSE DAYAN HAD DIFFERENT PERCEPTION OF DANGER IN SOUTH THAN

HIS PREDECESSOR DID, PERHAPS BECAUSE THERE HAD BEEN INCREASE IN PALESTINIAN PRESENCE SOUTH OF LITANI. IT APPEARED TO ME THAT NEITHER PALESTINIANS NOR ISRAELIS WANTED TO GET SUCKED INTO A FIGHT NOT OF THEIR OWN CHOOSING, AND WERE THEREFORE NOW INTERESTED IN THE PROPOSITION, WHEREAS THEY HAD HAD RESERVATIONS IN THE PAST.

7. WE BOTH AGREED THAT PALESTINIAN OPINION WAS A KEY FACTOR, AND HE NOTED THAT SARKIS WAS SEEING ABU IYAD AND ABU JIHAD LATER IN DAY AND HOPED GET READING FROM THEM. HE HAD HOPED TO TOUCH BASE WITH SYRIANS AS WELL, BUT THERE DID NOT SEEM TO BE TIME BEFORE VISIT. IT WOULD NOT LOOK WELL FOR HIM TO SCUTTLE OVER TO DAMASCUS DAY BEFORE SECRETARY ARRIVED.

8. COMMENT: BOUTROS AND SARKIS ARE CIRCLING AROUND THE UN FORCES
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IDEA VERY WARILY. THEIR PRINCIPAL CONCERN IS NOT TO TAKE STEP THICH WILL PROVOKE ADVERSE ARAB REACTION. IF WE WANT TO INFLUENCE THEM ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, THIS IS PSYCHOLOGICALLY RIGHT TIME TO DO SO. I HAVE TRIED TO AVOID ENCOURAGING BOUTROS, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME TRYING TO GIVE HIM A CLEARER IDEA OF WHAT MIGHT BE INVOLVED. APPARENTLY SUCCESSFUL OPERATION OVER WEEKEND UNDER WHICH DETERRENT FORCES OCCUPIED POSITIONS AROUND PALESTINIAN CAMPS AND RESISTANCE GROUPS VACATED INSTALLATIONS MAINTAINED OUTSIDE CAMPS, HAS GIVEN GOL A LITTLE MORE CONFIDENCE AND OPTIMISM, SO THAT SARKIS MAY NOW BE READY TO FACE COMPLICATED ISSUE OF SOUTH WITH MORE DETERMINATION THAN IN THE PAST.
PARKER

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